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AN URBANIZING WORLD: GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Note by the Secretariat

1. In paragraph 12 (a) of its Decision I/2, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) at its first substantive session decided, as one of its international objectives, that the preparatory process should seek:

> "To present a State of Human Settlements report that should contain a description of the main challenges and concerns of urbanization, identify human settlements development constraints at local, national and international levels, and build, on the basis of all available knowledge, a vision of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all."

It explained that such a knowledge base will be used to determine the extent to which the goals and commitments of the Vancouver Declaration, the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and Agenda 21 are being attained.

This report is now ready and available to the Conference.

2. The report assesses the conditions and trends in the world's human settlements - cities, towns and villages, and specifically reviews the role of cities in development, urban trends, social achievements, housing conditions and trends, governance and strategies for sustainable human settlements development.

3. The report also covers such pertinent social issues as poverty, inequality, gender, crime and violence, as well as pressing institutional concerns. It also examines important challenges such as public-private cooperation, financing of human settlements development, land adjudication, and the changing roles of central governments, local authorities and communities.

4. The report presents a comprehensive statistical annex with tables on various aspects of human settlements for reference by practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

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